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AUTHOR Decker, Dwight F.
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ABSTRACT

Twelve members of the Rhode Island Board of Regents, 14 administrators of Rhode Island Junior College (RIJC), and 14 officers of the RIJC Association were polled concerning who should set educational policy in twenty different areas. Responses were received from 6 regents, 10 administrators, and 10 faculty. Response data is given for the overall group, as well as for each of the three response groups. The overall data shows that the consensus favors negotiation between administrators and faculty in the following areas: assignment of faculty contact hours; faculty assignment for summer school and evening division; appointment, promotion, termination, and retrenchment of faculty; and criteria for faculty evaluation. A shared authority structure in which faculty and administration have equal voting status was recommended for divisional curriculum committees, peer judgment, accountability for faculty and administrators, general educational goals, criteria for evaluating deans and department chairmen, and community service. The administration should retain final authority (but with faculty advice) in the selection of deans and department chairmen, faculty scheduling, the school calendar, departmental budgets, public relations, recruiting of students, and changes to the physical plant. Regents should continue to control long-range institutional planning and the building of new facilities but faculty and administration should be consulted in both areas. (Author/AH)

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The Policy Role of the Faculty Bargaining Unit at Rhode Island Junior College

by
Dwight F. Decker, M.S.E.
Rhode Island Junior College

A Practicum Presented to Nova University
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of Doctor of Education

Nova University

April 8, 1975

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Introduction

The Rhode Island school teachers arbitration act of 1966 (more often called the Michaelson Act, named for the state senator who introduced it) gives "certified public school teachers the right to organize, to be represented, to negotiate professionally and to bargaining on a collective basis with school committees covering hours, salary, working conditions, and other terms of professional employment". It does not grant the right to strike and it excludes superintendents and principals from the bargaining unit.

For teachers at publicly supported colleges (such as Rhode Island Junior College), the Board of Regents replaces the school committee; and all Presidents, Vice Presidents, deans, and others having personnel supervisory functions except department chairmen are excluded from the bargaining unit.

No faculty member is required to become a member of the certified bargaining unit, but state law provides an agency shop situation only in so far as every faculty member must pay bargaining unit dues.

The present contract between the Board of Regents and the Rhode Island Junior College Faculty Association (an affiliate of the NEA) provides specifically negotiated policy and procedures for the following:

* faculty contact hours,
* assignments for summer and evening division teaching,

* appointment, promotion, termination, and retrenchment,
* criteria for faculty evaluation,
* selection of deans and department chairmen, and
* participation in divisional curriculum committees.

In all these areas, no administrative decision can be made without either prior faculty approval or the right of faculty to challenge.

The contract also provides that the faculty must be consulted for an advisory opinion before policy decisions are made in the following areas:

* long range planning,
* President's Advisory Council,
* faculty scheduling,
* the school calendar, and
* department budgets.

Let it be assumed that the Board of Regents, the administration, and the bargaining unit agree that the paramount goal for Rhode Island Junior College's existence is to serve the educational needs of the Rhode Island community which are not being met by other public colleges or other agencies.

The problem presents itself when one considers how best to determine policy to implement that goal. To be more specific, the following questions might be asked:

1. What policy decisions are best arrived at politically - a negotiated settlement between the administration (representing the Regents) and the faculty bargaining unit?

2. What decisions are best made by the administration using the faculty on an advisory basis?
3. What decisions are best made on a shared authority basis with both administrators and faculty having voting status?

Using these three questions to attack the problem of who should determine policy and how should decisions be made to implement policy, the following areas not covered by the contract could also be considered:

* public relations-particularly translating to the public the importance of the academic function,
* peer judgment,
* recruiting of students,
* accountability (both faculty and administration),
* educational goals,
* physical plant,
* evaluation of deans and department chairmen, and
* community service to solve community problems.

This paper has limitations which have been imposed to keep it from becoming too global to be properly researched. It does not address faculty welfare issues (salary, fringe benefits, leaves, college services, etc.). Furthermore, it does not solicit student opinion nor consider the advisability of setting up unions for students.

The issues involved will be those previously mentioned, all of which fall within the range of educational policy-that which influences the learning process.

How Rhode Island Junior College (RIJC) makes decisions in these matters will determine whether or not Rhode Islanders will continue their vigorous support of RIJC in a time of growing economic uncertainty.

Background and Significance

On the subject of faculty unions having participation in the formulation of educational policy, the literature of recent years is very divided. Some favor collective bargaining in educational policy areas and some do not. In addition to these pro-union and anti-union positions, others favor joint participation of faculty and administration in educational policy areas.

A report from the CEAS Abstract Series[1] from an international meeting of teachers' union representatives held in Sophia, Bulgaria states that teachers have an obligation to their students to strive for active participation in educational policymaking and organization. Coleman[2] even envisions a form of collective bargaining which could enhance the goal of universal higher education.

Selden[3] views teachers' unions as having a unique role in educational policy - offering solutions to problems without prior commitment to vested interests or to established, outmoded, or inadequate programs. The New York City teachers, for example, have had considerable impact on curriculum determination, textbook selection, and special educational programs. The More Effective Schools Plan for better remedial and psychological services had remarkable results over a three year period at the time of Selden's report.

Several authors advocate a joint participation of faculty and administrators in forming educational policy totally outside of the collective bargaining process. Keppel[4] calls for a cooperation of faculty, administration, and governmental and polit cal units to share authority in a system that would provide the checks and balances necessary to protect individual rights and at the same time establish and maintain meaningful educational standards. In a similar vein, Howard[5] argues that intruding forces -- parents, teachers, unions, and students -- should be included in policymaking discussions so that dissent can be incorporated constructively into the fabric of educational policymaking.

A report of the Educational Policies Commission[6] views the teacher as being a necessary contributor to the formulation of educational policy who recognizes that the ultimate control of education is justly and legally a public function. The report emphasizes the teacher's right to influence public policies and praises such influence as a good example to students.

Epstein[7] states that agreements should be reached by consensus rather than by administrative fiat, with teachers and administrators relating as partners rather than as adversaries. Common goals, open communication, and mutual respect are vital to this process.

The largest body of literature pertinent to this topic is opposed to faculty unions participating in formulation of educational policy. Sargent[8] warns that increased power of teacher unions due to a massive increase in membership could create an imbalance among competing power centers, leading to serious social dislocation.

On only a slightly less threatening note, Medlyn[9] accuses teachers of grasping after a "bilateral" management of education. Doherty[10] also states that bilateral determination of school policy in public education is rapidly becoming the norm as collective negotiation grows at both local and state levels. Competition between NEA and AFT to become the exclusive bargaining agent for teachers has fostered this trend.

Seaberg and Ulibarri[11] report that, in New Mexico, teacher organizations and administrators generally agree on what is important in decision making and policy formulation but disagree as to who should do it. The teachers want a voice, but the administrators claim policymaking is strictly a domain of administrators and the governing board.

Sandin[12] deplores the drift toward unionization in the profession of college teaching. The dominance of the labor - management model is tending to fragmentize the collegiate system into bailiwicks, presided over by interest groups. It is felt that such a system will be less purposive, and more susceptible and responsive to private interests rather than the public good.

With such a divergence of opinion concerning the proper place of faculty unions in the area of policymaking, the author felt this matter should be studied as it relates to Rhode Island Junior College.

Procedures

A questionnaire was made listing all the educational policy areas in the present contract plus the other eight policy areas included in the introduction. Members of the Board of Regents, administrators at RIJC, and Executive Board members of the Faculty Association were asked to express their opinion on each item concerning whether that area should (1) be the exclusive province of one group, (2) be decided by the administration with the advice of the faculty or by the Board of Regents with advice from administrators and faculty, (3) be negotiated into the contract by adversary proceedings, or (4) be jointly shared by both faculty and administration.

Administrators selected included only those who have supervisory roles concerning other faculty or staff - the President, two Vice Presidents, and the deans. Executive Board members, being elected, were chosen as being representative of the faculty. It is assumed that the Board of Regents with their broadly based backgrounds represent the citizens of Rhode Island.

No attempt has been made to solicit student opinion because no one single body has been elected to represent students. Should a random sampling of student opinion be attempted, the task would become far too large at this time.

Anonymity for respondents was provided (See Appendix A).

Results

The results of the questionnaire are shown in tabulated form in the four tables beginning with the next page. They are broken down as follows:

(1) Total responses - Regents, administrators, and faculty officers,

(2) Regents' responses,

(3) Administrators' responses,

and (4) Faculty officers' responses.

Of the twelve Regents, six responded; it is hoped that these six are representative of the total group. For the administrators and faculty officers, ten out of a total of fourteen responded in each case; these cross-sections should be valid indicators of opinions for both groups.

Examination of the overall data (Table 1) shows several dominant trends. A consensus feels that the following policies should be negotiated by administrators and faculty and included in the contract:

* the assignment of faculty contact hours,
* faculty assignment for summer school and evening division,
* appointment, promotion, termination, and retrenchment of faculty, and
* criteria for faculty evaluation.

TABLE 1

OVERALL RESPONSE - REGENTS, ADMINISTRATORS AND FACULTY OFFICERS

QUESTIONNAIRE

For each of the items below, please use the following letter code in filling in the blank space which precedes each item:

A - I think policy in this area should be shared by administrators (acting on behalf of the Regents) and the faculty with each having voting status.

B - In my opinion, this policy should be arrived at by the administration and faculty through the negotiation process and clearly stated in the contract.

C - This policy responsibility belongs to the administration, but the faculty should be consulted for advice.

D - This policy responsibility belongs to the Regents, but the administrators and faculty should be consulted for advice.

E - This policy responsibility lies exclusively with the administration.

F - This policy responsibility lies exclusively with the Regents.

Give your opinion concerning how policy should be determined in the following areas:

A	B	C	D	E	F	
3	14	5	1	2	0	1. The assignment of contact hours (classes and laboratory sessions) per week which are given to faculty.
2	12	10	0	2	0	2. Faculty assignments for summer school and evening division teaching.
2	14	6	0	3	0	3. The appointment, promotion, termination and retrenchment of faculty.
8	13	4	0	0	1	4. Criteria for faculty evaluation.
9	1	11	0	4	1	5. Selection of deans and department chairmen.

A	B	C	D	E	F	
14	5	5	0	1	0	6. Participation in divisional curriculum committees.
3	2	7	9	1	3	7. Long range institutional planning.
3	5	12	0	5	0	8. Faculty scheduling.
6	4	11	1	3	1	9. The school calendar.
4	0	18	0	3	1	10. Departmental budgets.
4	2	15	0	5	0	11. Institutional public relations.
11	7	4	0	1	1	12. Peer judgment of faculty by faculty or administrators by administrators.
2	0	16	0	6	1	13. Recruiting of students.
11	3	6	0	4	0	14. Accountability for faculty.
9	2	2	5	4	4	15. Accountability for administrators.
9	2	5	6	1	3	16. General educational goals of the institution.
1	0	15	5	2	2	17. Changes to the physical plant.
3	0	8	10	1	3	18. The building of new physical plant.
7	5	8	2	3	1	19. Criteria for evaluation of deans and department chairmen.
9	0	8	3	1	1	20. Community service to solve community problems.

TABLE 2

REGENTS' RESPONSE

QUESTIONNAIRE

For each of the items below, please use the following letter code in filling in the blank space which precedes each item:

A - I think policy in this area should be shared by administrators (acting on behalf of the Regents) and the faculty with each having voting status.

B - In my opinion, this policy should be arrived at by the administration and faculty through the negotiation process and clearly stated in the contract.

C - This policy responsibility belongs to the administration, but the faculty should be consulted for advice.

D - This policy responsibility belongs to the Regents, but the administrators and faculty should be consulted for advice.

E - This policy responsibility lies exclusively with the administration.

F - This policy responsibility lies exclusively with the Regents.

Give your opinion concerning how policy should be determined in the following areas:

A	B	C	D	E	F	
0	2	2	1	0	0	1. The assignment of contact hours (classes and laboratory sessions) per week which are given to faculty.
0	1	3	0	2	0	2. Faculty assignments for summer school and evening division teaching.
0	2	1	0	2	0	3. The appointment, promotion, termination and retrenchment of faculty.
1	1	3	0	0	1	4. Criteria for faculty evaluation.
1	0	1	0	3	1	5. Selection of deans and department chairmen.

A	B	C	D	E	F	
1	0	3	0	1	0	6. Participation in divisional curriculum committees.
0	0	0	3	0	2	7. Long range institutional planning.
0	0	3	0	3	0	8. Faculty scheduling.
0	0	2	0	3	1	9. The school calendar.
0	0	5	0	1	0	10. Departmental budgets.
0	0	4	0	2	0	11. Institutional public relations.
2	0	1	0	1	1	12. Peer judgment of faculty by faculty or administrators by administrators.
0	0	2	0	4	0	13. Recruiting of students.
1	0	3	0	2	0	14. Accountability for faculty.
1	1	1	1	0	3	15. Accountability for administrators.
0	0	0	3	1	2	16. General educational goals of the institution.
0	0	1	2	0	2	17. Changes to the physical plant.
0	0	1	2	0	2	18. The building of new physical plant.
1	0	2	0	2	1	19. Criteria for evaluation of deans and department chairmen.
0	0	3	0	0	1	20. Community service to solve community problems.

TABLE 3

ADMINISTRATORS' RESPONSE

QUESTIONNAIRE

For each of the items below, please use the following letter code in filling in the blank space which precedes each item:

A - I think policy in this area should be shared by administrators (acting on behalf of the Regents) and the faculty with each having voting status.

B - In my opinion, this policy should be arrived at by the administration and faculty through the negotiation process and clearly stated in the contract.

C - This policy responsibility belongs to the administration, but the faculty should be consulted for advice.

D - This policy responsibility belongs to the Regents, but the administrators and faculty should be consulted for advice.

E - This policy responsibility lies exclusively with the administration.

F - This policy responsibility lies exclusively with the Regents.

Give your opinion concerning how policy should be determined in the following areas:

A	B	C	D	E	F	
1	6	1	0	1	0	1. The assignment of contact hours (classes and laboratory sessions) per week which are given to faculty.
1	4	5	0	0	0	2. Faculty assignments for summer school and evening division teaching.
1	4	4	0	1	0	3. The appointment, promotion, termination and retrenchment of faculty.
4	5	1	0	0	0	4. Criteria for faculty evaluation.
1	0	8	0	1	0	5. Selection of deans and department chairmen.
0	0	5	3	1	1	6. Participation in divisional curriculum committees.

A	B	C	D	E	F		
0	0	5	3	1	1	7.	Long range institutional planning.
0	0	8	0	2	0	8.	Faculty scheduling.
2	1	6	1	0	0	9.	The school calendar.
0	0	7	0	2	1	10.	Departmental budgets.
1	1	7	0	1	0	11.	Institutional public relations.
6	2	2	0	0	0	12.	Peer judgment of faculty by faculty or administrators by administrators.
0	0	9	0	0	1	13.	Recruiting of students.
4	1	3	0	1	0	14.	Accountability for faculty.
3	0	1	2	3	0	15.	Accountability for administrators.
4	1	2	2	0	1	16.	General educational goals of the institution.
0	0	6	3	1	0	17.	Changes to the physical plant.
1	0	3	5	0	1	18.	The building of new physical plant.
1	1	6	1	1	0	19.	Criteria for evaluation of deans and department chairmen.
3	0	4	2	0	0	20.	Community service to solve community problems.

TABLE 4

FACULTY OFFICERS' RESPONSE

QUESTIONNAIRE

For each of the items below, please use the following letter code in filling in the blank space which precedes each item:

A - I think policy in this area should be shared by administrators (acting on behalf of the Regents) and the faculty with each having voting status.

B - In my opinion, this policy should be arrived at by the administration and faculty through the negotiation process and clearly stated in the contract.

C - This policy responsibility belongs to the administration, but the faculty should be consulted for advice.

D - This policy responsibility belongs to the Regents, but the administrators and faculty should be consulted for advice.

E - This policy responsibility lies exclusively with the administration.

F - This policy responsibility lies exclusively with the Regents.

Give your opinion concerning how policy should be determined in the following areas:

A	B	C	D	E	F	
2	6	2	0	0	0	1. The assignment of contact hours (classes and laboratory sessions) per week which are given to faculty.
1	7	2	0	0	0	2. Faculty assignments for summer school evening division teaching.
1	8	1	0	0	0	3. The appointment, promotion, termination and retrenchment of faculty.
3	7	0	0	0	0	4. Criteria for faculty evaluation.
7	1	2	0	0	0	5. Selection of deans and department chairmen.

A	B	C	D	E	F	
7	3	0	0	0	0	6. Participation in divisional curriculum committees.
3	2	2	3	0	0	7. Long range institutional planning.
3	5	1	0	0	0	8. Faculty scheduling.
4	3	3	0	0	0	9. The school calendar.
4	0	6	0	0	0	10. Departmental budgets.
3	1	4	0	2	0	11. Institutional public relations.
4	5	1	0	0	0	12. Peer judgment of faculty by faculty or administrators by administrators.
2	0	5	0	2	0	13. Recruiting of students.
6	2	0	0	1	0	14. Accountability for faculty.
5	1	0	2	1	1	15. Accountability for administrators.
5	1	3	1	0	0	16. General educational goals of the institution.
1	0	8	0	1	0	17. Changes to the physical plant.
2	0	5	2	1	0	18. The building of new physical plant.
5	4	0	1	0	0	19. Criteria for evaluation of deans and department chairmen.
6	0	1	1	1	0	20. Community service to solve community problems.

The shared authority model (administrators and faculty each having voting status) was advocated on an overall basis for the divisional curriculum committees, peer judgment of administrators and faculty, accountability for faculty and administrators, general educational goals, and for community service.

It was generally felt that administration should decide with advice from the faculty on the following matters:

* selection of deans and department chairmen,
* faculty scheduling,
* the school calendar,
* department budgets,
* public relations,
* recruiting of students,
* changes to the physical plant.

A plurality overall felt that new physical plant building authority and long range planning rests with the Regents, but the administrators and faculty should be consulted for advice. Very few opted for exclusive jurisdiction by either Regents or administrators; many commented that the day of unilateral decisions in policy areas is gone.

The Regents' responses are quite varied except in three areas. A majority (See Table 2) feel that department budgets and public relations are the duty of the administration with advice from the faculty. Interestingly, a majority decided that policy in recruiting students is exclusively a function of the Regents.

The responses by the administrators (Table 3) and faculty officers (Table 4) came close to paralleling each other and the overall responses except in the following areas.

* selection of deans and department chairmen,
* long range planning,
* faculty scheduling,
* school calendar,
* criteria for evaluation of deans and department chairmen.

In none of these cases did either group desire exclusive authority; the predominance was for shared authority, negotiated settlement, or for administrative decision with the advice of the faculty.

Most of the individual questionnaires showed a variation of responses indicating to the author that the respondents gave deep thought concerning the educational mission of Rhode Island Junior College in answering each question. Many respondents rightfully mentioned that distinguishing between educational policy and college governance is often virtually impossible.

Recommendations

Because of the thoughtful consideration which each respondent put into the questionnaire, the author agrees with a plurality of the total response on each item except the criteria for evaluation of deans and department chairmen. He would place this on a shared authority basis rather than leave it to the administration with advice of the faculty.

In summary, (1) the setting of faculty contact hours, (2) faculty assignments for summer school and evening division, (3) appointment, promotion, termination, and retrenchment of faculty, and (4) criteria for faculty evaluation should continue to be set as it is presently - negotiated by administration and faculty and clearly stated in the contract.

At the present time, the contract provides for joint participation and voting by both administration and faculty on divisional curriculum committees. In the future, it should provide shared authority mechanisms by administrators and faculty (both with voting status) for policy decisions concerning peer judgment, accountability for faculty, accountability for administrators, general educational goals, criteria for evaluating deans and department chairmen, and community service. The committee designed to share this authority might be different for different policy areas.

The administration should retain final authority (but be required to seek certain specified faculty input) in the following areas:

* selection of deans and department chairmen,
* faculty scheduling,
* the school calendar,
* departmental budgets,
* institutional public relations,
* recruiting of students,
* changes to the physical plant.

In particular, if a shared vote were necessary on faculty schedules, the school calendar, or budgets, utter chaos could result. Except for public relations, student recruitment, and physical plant changes, advice by faculty is provided in the present contract.

The final two items (of a total of 20) on the questionnaire - long range institutional planning and building of new physical plant - should continue to be the responsibility of the Regents. However, both administrators and faculty should be consulted in these areas to ensure that policies which are decided will be effectively implemented.

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APPENDIX A

PLEASE HELP!

Dear Friend:

I am presently participating in a graduate course in collegiate educational policy systems. One of the course requirements is to write a research paper involving people who by virtue of elected, appointed, or professional responsibility have a voice in setting educational policy. Therefore, members of the Board of Regents, College administrators, and officers of the faculty bargaining unit will be included.

My chosen topic is The Policy Role of The Faculty Bargaining Unit at Rhode Island Junior College. Your help in gathering the research data necessary to complete this paper will be greatly appreciated. Your answers will be considered confidential and only the statistical totals will be used in formulating my report.

To keep your answers to this questionnaire anonymous, please do not sign it. Simpy indicate at the top of your questionnaire whether you are a Regent, an RIJC administrator, or an RIJC Faculty Association officer. Then send it to:

DWIGHT DECKER
PHYSICS DEPARTMENT
RHODE ISLAND JUNIOR COLLEGE
400 EAST AVENUE
WARWICK, RHODE ISLAND 02886

UNIVERSITY OF CALIF.
LOS ANGELES
MAY 2 1975
CLEARINGHOUSE FOR
JUNIOR COLLEGE
INFORMATION

Please reply before February 28, 1975.

Since this will be an action oriented research paper, some constructive change will probably take place with your thoughts having a vital input. Consider your answers carefully; I hope the changes that result will be helpful to your mission.

My heartfelt thanks for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

Dwight Decker

Dwight Decker

P.S. Each of you will receive the results of the questionnaire and the recommendations of the report.